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Message Text

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11
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-11 DPW-01 DHA-02 L-03

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 /063 W
---------- 001427
R 161550Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3657
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0106

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, AG, FR, SS
SUBJECT: SAHARA FRENCH PRISONERS

REF: ALGIERS 87

1. IN DISCUSSION POLISARIO CAPABILITIES WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR (WE BOTH AGREED THAT THEY SEEM APPRECIABLY GREATER THAN WE HAD ORIGINALLY THOUGHT) LATTER SAID FRENCH HERE HAD SO FAR BEEN UNABLE GET RELIABLE INFORMATION ON THEIR NATIONALS PRESUMABLY CAPTURED BY POLISARIO. FRENCH AMBASSADOR MADE FOLLOWING POINTS ON SITUATION:

A. RADIO SAHARA (ALGIERS) NIGHT OF JANUARY 13 HAD BROADCAST COMMUNIQUE FROM POLISARIO DESCRIBING CAPTURE OF MOROCCAN MILITARY CONVOY SOUTH OF AL-AYOUN. CONVOY INCLUDED VOLKSWAGEN, TWO PASSENGERS IN WHICH HAD BEEN KILLED. BOARDCAST DESCRIBED ONE OF THESE PERSONS AS FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE FROM RABAT AND GAVE HIS NAME IN ARABIC, AS SOMETHING WHICH APPROACHES GUYOT, NAME OF FRENCH POLITICAL COUNSELOR AT RABAT. BROADCAST ALSO GAVE NUMBER AND DATE OF ISSUANCE OF MOROCCAN ID CARD, WHICH CORRESPONDS EXACTLY WITH DOCUMENT HELD BY GUYOT'S SON.
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B. MORNING OF JANUARY 15 EL MOUDJAHID PUBLISHED
POLISARIO REPORT SAYING ORGANIZATION NOW HELD SEVEN
FRENCH PRISONERS (REFTEL) BUT MAKING NO MENTION OF DEATHS.
THIS WOULD TALLY WITH TOTAL OF TWO COOPERANTS KNOWN CAPTURED,
PLUS PARTY OF FIVE OF WHICH GUYOT CHILDREN MEMBERS.
(NOTE: AS NOTED REFTEL, JAN 13 LE MONDE REPORTED THAT
IN ADDITION TO SEVEN, TWO OTHER FRENCHMEN HAD DISAPPEARED
ENROUTE TO EL AYOUN.)

C. FRENCH HAVE NOT WANTED APPROACH POLISARIO DIRECTLY
BUT HAVE MADE QUERIES THROUGH ALGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY
AND THROUGH LOCAL AFP CORRESPONDENT. FOREIGN MINISTRY
HAS YET TO REPLY. AFP CORRESPONDENT REPORTS, HOWEVER,
THAT POLISARIO TELLS HIM REPORT OF SEVEN PRISONERS IS
FALSE AND THAT ORGANIZATION HOLDS ONLY THREE FRENCH PRISONERS,
TWO OF WHOM ARE THE SO-CALLED MILITARY (ACTUALLY COOPERANT)
AND ONE OF WHOM IS PILOT OF SMALL FRENCH PLANE SHOT
DOWN SOME WEEKS AGO.

2. COMMENT: FRENCH HERE DO NOT KNOW WHOM TO BELIEVE,
BUT FIND FACT THAT POLISARIO OBVIOUSLY HAS ONE OF GUYOT
ID CARDS OMINOUS.PARKER

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